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ABSTRACT

This guide to the transition of special education students to less restrictive environments or from school to work stresses the importance of planning and communication during the entire process, from initial plans through implementation and follow-up. Section 1 consists of a "Transition Process Checklist" to aid in the organization and follow through of transition activities. Section II consists of answers to commonly asked questions about each of the following steps in the transition process: Individualized Education Program (IEP) design; placement; change in living arrangements; assessment; timing; instruction; staff identification; staff needs assessment; staff training; visits by staff to the current placement; visits by staff/parents to the new placement; visits by the student to the new placement; the transition team; IEP modification; the student schedule; peer "sensitization"; informing regular education parents; curriculum and evaluation modification; plant modification and equipment; transportation; coordination of related services; communication systems; student records; medical services; transition; the student support group; support activities for family and siblings; the follow-up support team; and monitoring and modification. Appendixes include a sample ecological inventory, a transition timeline, a listing of topics related to the least restrictive environment, and a student checklist. (DB)

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Transitions
to
Least Restrictive Environments

A Guide to Transition
developed by
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TRANSITIONS TO LESS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

INTRODUCTION

It is said that the only thing certain is change. How true! All of us experience change in our lives. While many of these changes are exciting and full of opportunities, they can also be challenging. Each change may bring new environments, new people or new demands -- each causing some amount of stress in our lives.

Students with disabilities experience as much change in their lives as we do. Like us, some students respond well to change while others have difficulty adapting. It is our responsibility to make these changes happen as smoothly as possible for our students so they receive the maximum benefit from their educational experience.

In special education we refer to the changes our students make as "transitions." Transitions come in all sizes and shapes. Transition may refer to moving from one activity to another, from school to work or from one educational placement to another. While it is this last type of transition that will be addressed in the following pages, there are two critical components necessary for any successful transition. The first of these is planning. Proper planning for transitions will result in the most effective and efficient use of staff and student energies and resources. The second critical component is communication. In essence, this component is a necessary part of effective planning. However, communication must occur not only during the planning phase, but also during the actual transition and follow-up activities. It is primarily with these two components of transition that the following pages are concerned.

Section I consists of a "Transition Process Checklist" and directions for its use. The purpose of this checklist is to aid in the organization and follow through of all activities related to the successful transition of a student from one educational placement to another.

Section II consists of answers to commonly asked questions about each step in the transition process. This section also includes references to materials which may provide additional information on each area.

Section I

TRANSITION PROCESS CHECKLIST

Student: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Sending School: _____ Receiving School: _____

Program Supervisor: _____ Program Supervisor: _____

Staff	Title	Staff	Title
_____	_____	_____	Case Manager, _____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Parent(s): _____

_____

Other: _____

ACTIVITIES ARE NOT NECESSARILY IN PRIORITY OR CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Activity	Date(s) Scheduled	Person(s) Responsible	Details/Comments	Date Completed
1. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT)* designs IEP objectives for the student. The PPT then determines that the student is ready for a transition to a new placement.				
2. The PPT recommends the specific placement (type of service and location).				
3. Determine if a change in living arrangements must also be planned/pursued.				
4. Assess the receiving environment and student's strengths and needs, with particular attention to skills which will enhance the transition and integration with peers.				
5. Determine when and how the student will be informed of the transition.				
6. Begin providing instruction to student in areas which will assist him/her with transition to the new environment.				
7. Identify the staff who will be involved with the student.				
8. Assess each staff person's training needs in relation to transitioning and integrating the student.				
9. Provide necessary training to staff.				

*The PPT should include parents and representatives from both placements who will be/are directly involved with the student

Activity	Date(s) Scheduled	Person(s) Responsible	Details/Comments	Date Completed
10. Send receiving staff to visit the student in his/her current placement.				
11. Arrange for current staff/parents to visit new placement.				
12. Arrange for student to visit new placement one or more times.				
13. Provide opportunities for sending and receiving staff, and others to meet to discuss student. This group should now form a "Transition Team" which will be responsible for most of the transition activities.				
14. Design IEP goals and objectives which meet the student's needs within the new placement, and enhance his/her ability to become integrated with peers.				
15. Establish a weekly schedule for the student which addresses IEP objectives in the most integrated contexts possible.				
16. Consider activities to "sensitize" non-handicapped peers.				
17. Inform regular education parents and PTA of integration activities.				
18. Modify curricula and evaluation procedures as necessary.				
19. Arrange for any necessary modifications to physical plant or equipment.				

Activity	Date(s) Scheduled	Person(s) Responsible	Details/Comments	Date Completed
20. Arrange for transportation.				
21. Coordinate any related services for the new placement.				
22. Set up communication system between necessary parties (i.e., home-school, sending-receiving teachers).				
23. Transfer appropriate student records to receiving school.				
24. Address any changes in, or needs for medical services due to the transition.				
25. Transition student to new placement (part-time or full-time based on student's needs).				
26. Develop peer support group for student (i.e., Circle of Friends, peer tutors).				
27. Identify support activities for family and siblings if desired.				
28. Establish a follow-up, problem solving, and crisis intervention support team of staff and parents.				
29. Monitor student's progress on IEP objectives regularly, with particular attention to new placement and integration into school community. Make any necessary modifications.				

Section II

1. THE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAM (PPT) DESIGNS IEP OBJECTIVES FOR THE STUDENT. THE PPT THEN DETERMINES THAT THE STUDENT IS READY FOR A TRANSITION TO A NEW PLACEMENT.

Why does the PPT choose IEP objectives before choosing a placement?

Public Law 94-142 (also referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) requires that placement decisions be based on the individual student's instructional needs. Therefore, student needs should be determined first, usually in the form of annual goals and short-term objectives. After these have been determined, the PPT chooses the most appropriate, least restrictive environment in which to meet the student's needs.

How does the PPT determine that a new placement is appropriate?

Public Law 94-142 provides direction to school systems and PPT members in this area as well. First of all, the law states that a continuum of placements must be available to meet the needs of students. Secondly, the school system is directed to educate handicapped children with children who are not handicapped to the maximum extent appropriate. Also, removal of handicapped children from regular education environments should occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Therefore, the goal of the PPT is to develop the best educational program for the student within the least restrictive environment (LRE). Whenever placement is considered, environments should be considered which are less restrictive than the current placement. The PPT members then must use their best professional judgement to choose the least restrictive environment in which to meet the student's needs.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Biklen, D., Lehr, S., and Taylor, S. (1987). Purposeful Integration... Inherently Equal. Syracuse: Center on Human Policy.

Brinker, R. and Thorpe, M. (1984). "Integration of severely handicapped students and the proportion of IEP objectives achieved." Exceptional Children, Vol. 51, No. 2, 168-175.

CT Department of Education (1986). A parent guide to special education in Connecticut.

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Powell, T., Rainforth, B., Hecimovic, A., Steere, D., Mayes M., Zoback, M., and Singer, A. (1985). Connecticut's Data-Based Model: Developing Integrated Public School Programs for Students with Severe Handicaps. N. Windham, CT: EASTCONN.

Public Law 94-142. The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975. (November 1975). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

2. THE PPT RECOMMENDS THE SPECIFIC PLACEMENT (TYPE OF SERVICE AND LOCATION).

What types of placements might be available?

The continuum of placements required by Public Law 94-142 includes full-time regular education, full-time regular education with consultation, part-time regular education with part-time resource room, a full-time special education class, a special school, homebound instruction, or hospital-based instruction. While these labels may be similar in all school systems, the specific placement will vary immensely. It is therefore critical to know about the specific options which are available before making a decision.

Which choice comes first -- the type of service or the location?

In theory, the type of service (regular class, resource room, etc.) should be chosen first, based upon the student's needs. This service should then be provided within the school which the student would normally attend. However, many school systems structure their special education services so that certain placement options are only available in certain schools. While this is not in conflict with PL 94-142, many parents and professionals feel that the best placements for students with disabilities are within their neighborhood school. This is clearly an issue that each school system will have to discuss and decide for itself, with the best interests of the student in mind.

At times the program is chosen for reasons other than physical location. For example, the preparation of personnel in a program can make a major impact on student progress. While all personnel should be working towards improving their teaching skills for all students, some personnel are likely to be more qualified in certain areas. The placement decision may therefore hinge on the abilities of the personnel. Another factor which may influence placement is the attitude that the receiving staff and students have toward students with disabilities. As attitude is a critical factor in successful integration, this may be important enough to push the decision in one direction or another.

While these types of reasons may influence placement decisions at the moment, the school system should make efforts to rectify these issues so that future placements will not rest on staff ability and attitude.

Does everyone on the PPT have to agree to the placement decision?

While the goal of the PPT is to reach consensus about the placement for the student, not everyone has to agree. The main parties, the Local Education Agency and the parent(s), must agree to the placement before it can be implemented. If any other team members disagree this can be noted in the minutes of the meeting. If either of the main parties disagrees, they should withhold their signature, make note of their disagreement within the minutes, and then may follow the due process procedures. This process might involve an administrative review of the case, mediation by an impartial party, and a due process hearing, if necessary. Fortunately, parents and LEAs usually reach an agreement on placement long before entering into these procedures.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Biklen, D., Lehr, S., and Taylor, S. (1987). Purposeful Integration... Inherently Equal. Syracuse: Center on Human Policy.

Connecticut State Department of Education, (1986). A guide to special education in Connecticut.

Heron, T. and Harris, K. (1987). The Educational Consultant. Austin, Texas: Pro-Ed.

Public Law 94-142. The Education for all Handicapped Children, Act of 1975. (November 1975). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

3. DETERMINE IF A CHANGE IN LIVING ARRANGEMENTS MUST ALSO BE PLANNED/PURSUED.

What types of changes in living arrangements should be considered?

The two most common involve family/home life. The first is the possibility that the student may be leaving a residential care facility (private school or group home) as a result of the educational transition. He/She may be moving into another similar residential environment or moving back home. Obviously, either type of move will bring with it a lot of change for the student and family. In addition, the school staff may have some logistics to work out in order for the residential transition to occur enabling the student to attend the school.

The other type of transition to consider involves family dynamics. A new marriage or a new child in the family may bring about stress for the student enough so that the timing of an educational transition may be postponed.

Teams should be sensitive in discussing these issues and come to conclusions which are in the best interest of the student and his/her family.

4. ASSESS THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT'S STRENGTHS AND NEEDS, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SKILLS WHICH WILL ENHANCE THE TRANSITION AND INTEGRATION WITH PEERS.

Why is it important to assess the receiving environment?

In order to prepare the student for success in his/her new placement, the sending staff must know what the demands of the new environment will include. By assessing the new environment and comparing this information to an assessment of the current environment, the critical differences can be highlighted. The instructional team and the parents can then prepare the student for these differences, and/or suggest changes in the receiving environment.

How is the receiving environment assessed?

Observations of the receiving environments and informal interviews with the receiving staff can assist in gathering the necessary information. An effective structure for this process might be the ecological inventory strategy (Brown, et al., 1979). This strategy employs a process of delineating the specific environments in which the student will spend time, the activities which occur in those environments and the skills needed by the student for each of those activities. The team can then determine which, if any, adaptations need to be made. (See Appendix A.)

How should the student's strengths and needs be assessed?

Effective assessment, whether for a transitional period or not, is an ongoing process which involves many different strategies. These may include observation, interviews, review of records and the use of commercial criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tools. By combining strategies, a more comprehensive picture of the student will be developed. Any strategies which are used should be sure to focus on the student's capacity more strongly than on his/her deficits. This is especially true during transitional periods as a positive attitude towards the student's capacity may lead the team to find ways to make the transition successful, rather than finding reasons why it will fail.

Which skills enhance transition and integration?

Any skills which will lead a student to greater independence will obviously enhance integration and transition. The more independent the student is, the more likely he will fit into a less restrictive environment. However, there are some areas which may be particularly helpful for a student. These include (but are not limited to) the ability to generalize skills across different environments, people and materials; to stay on task; to communicate needs in some fashion; to problem solve in new situations; to function as part of a group (i.e., waiting, turn-taking); and to adapt easily to change.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Browder, D.M. (1987). Assessment of Individuals with Severe Handicaps. Baltimore: Brookes.

Brown, L., et. al. (1979). "Using the characteristics of current and subsequent least restrictive environments in the development of curricular content for severely handicapped students." AAESPH Review, 4, 407-424.

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Hupp, S.C., Donofrio, M.N. (1983). "Assessment of multiply and severely handicapped learners for the development of cross-referenced objectives." Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped, 8(3), 17-28.

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Salend, S. & Viglianti, D. (1982). "Preparing secondary students for the mainstream." TEACHING Exceptional Children, 14, 137-140.

Wood, J. & Miederhoff, J. (1989). "Bridging the gap." TEACHING Exceptional Children, 21(2), 66-68.

5. DISCUSS THE BEST TIME TO INFORM THE STUDENT OF THE TRANSITION.

Why is this important for the team to discuss?

Depending on a multitude of factors at school and home, one moment may be better than another to communicate with the student about the transition. If this moment is not coordinated between school and home, it might be right for one place and not the other. For example, one family was very excited about the plan for their son to attend his local school in the fall. They told him immediately, without the teacher's knowledge. The next day in school the student had many questions and anxieties which caught the teacher off guard and unprepared to answer, leading to even greater anxiety for the student.

When is the best time to inform the student of the transition?

For each student the best time may be different. The team will have to make a decision based on a variety of factors, including the student's long-term memory, the student's ability to comprehend the move, the student's ability to prepare in any way, the definitiveness of the transition, the amount of specific information available, etc.

Where can I find more information on this step?

The best source is the family and staff that know the student well. In addition, you may want to talk to other teams who have transitioned other students.

6. BEGIN PROVIDING INSTRUCTION TO STUDENT IN AREAS WHICH WILL ASSIST HIM/HER WITH TRANSITION TO THE NEW ENVIRONMENT.

Who should provide this instruction?

Many people make up the instructional team for a student. Typically we think of the student's teacher, teacher aides and therapists as the instructional team. Also on this team are parents, siblings and any other person that plays a significant role in the student's life.

Does the student need to have these skills before moving to a new placement?

No, there are no rules which mandate that specific skills are an absolute prerequisite to a specific placement. However, some people feel that certain skills should be present before a student is enrolled in certain placements (i.e., independent toileting before placement in a regular classroom). These are issues that will need to be addressed within each individual school system and program.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Brady, M. and McEvoy, M. (1989). Social skills training as an integration strategy. In Gaylord, Ross, R. (Ed). Integration Strategies for Students with Handicaps. Baltimore: Brookes: 213-232.

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Musslewhite, C.R. and St. Louis, K.W. (1988). Communication Programming for Persons with Severe Handicaps. Boston: College-Hill Press.

Schutz, R.P., Williams, W., Iverson, G.S., and Duncan, D. (1984). Social integration of severely handicapped students. In Certo, N., Haring, N., York, R. (Eds.) Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students: Rational Issues and Progressive Alternatives. Baltimore: Brookes: 15-42.

7. IDENTIFY THE STAFF WHO WILL BE INVOLVED WITH THE STUDENT.

What type of personnel might be involved with the student?

Many different people will be involved with students with disabilities in direct and indirect ways. In addition to the traditional instructional team of teachers, teacher aides and therapists, these students will also come in contact with cafeteria workers, custodians, the secretary, psychologist, nurse, social worker, art, music, and physical education teachers, principal, etc. When identifying these personnel, it is important to assess the student-to-staff ratio in relation to meeting the student's needs. Perhaps some addition to, or rearrangement of, staff may be warranted by the move.

Why is it important to identify all of these personnel before the student makes the transition?

A review of the literature on experiences with school integration highlights the need for staff to prepare themselves for the changes they will be experiencing. This preparation will include attitude preparation as well as skill preparation. The sooner this process can start, the more likely the transition will go smoothly.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Powell, T., Rainforth, B., Hecimovic, A., Steere, D., Mayes M., Zoback, M., and Singer, A. (1985). Connecticut's Data-Based Model: Developing Integrated Public School Programs for Students with Severe Handicaps. N. Windham, CT: EASTCONN.

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

8. ASSESS EACH STAFF PERSON'S TRAINING NEEDS IN RELATION TO TRANSITIONING AND INTEGRATING THE STUDENT.

Which staff should be involved with this assessment?

The priority for needs analysis and training will be with staff who will be directly involved with the student (i.e., teachers, teacher aides, therapists). However, it will also be helpful to assess other staff needs so that at some point all of the staff can improve their skills related to integration and transition.

What type of training needs are related to transition and integration?

Staff may need general training in the philosophy behind the integration movement, general information on disabilities, curriculum design for students with special needs, student assessment and ongoing evaluation, direct instructional strategies, working as a team, collaborative consultation, facilitating peer interactions, etc. For more detailed suggestions, see Appendix B.

What methods can be used to assess training needs?

While there are many methods available to assess training needs, perhaps the most appropriate for this type of situation are the use of a questionnaire, interviews and observations. For the most accurate assessment, a combination of two of these three approaches is recommended. The needs assessment process should be sure to ask for the staff's perceptions of their needs rather than relying on a supervisor's or outside consultant's judgement. This will result not only in a more comprehensive picture of the needs, but also in greater commitment to the training process.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Gable, R.K., Pecheone, R.L., and Gillung, T.B. (1981) "A needs assessment model for establishing personnel training priorities." Teacher Education and Special Education, 4 (4), 8-14.

Greenburg, D.E. (1987). A special educator's perspective on interfacing special and general education: A review for administrators. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

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Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

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9. PROVIDE NECESSARY TRAINING TO STAFF.

When should the training be provided?

Training should be provided before, during and after the transition. Some training will be critical before the student enters the new placement, while some training can wait until the student is comfortably settled in. For example, specific behavior management strategies related to the student should be discussed prior to the student's transition, while training on peer tutoring programs may be able to wait until after the transition. The scheduling of the training activities will differ with each situation based on the needs of the students and the resources of the school system.

Who should provide the necessary training?

There are advantages to using both in-house staff and outside consultants to provide training. Outside consultants often bring a new perspective to a situation because of their neutrality. They may also be able to provide expertise which is not currently available within the staff resources. Outside consultants may also be in a better position to encourage change without being seen as playing a supervisory or administrative role. However, using in-house staff to provide training also has its advantages. First, by using people within the system, there may be a greater sense of commitment to the changes which will be affecting these same people. Also, in-house staff will be much more familiar with the strengths, needs, and particulars of the system. Finally, by using in-house staff, there is a public recognition of the expertise which is in the system to be shared among the staff. With benefits to be drawn from both types of trainers, perhaps the best answer is to use a combination of people to develop and implement the training.

One other note: when providing training to people in a variety of roles, it may be helpful to have a variety of disciplines represented on your training team. For example, when discussing transdisciplinary teaming, it may be most effective to use teachers and therapists to provide the training activities. This will not only cover various points of view, but also show a commitment to the concept of teaming in providing effective education.

Should parents be involved in the training program?

It is appropriate to include parents in some of the training activities. Parents already play an integral role in the education of their child. Therefore, assisting them with their skills and sharing in their expertise will broaden the effectiveness of the entire team. However, it is important that in any training activity, parents be viewed as equal team members. Their knowledge and understanding should be given the value that it deserves in the overall development of the educational program.

Where can I find more information on this step?

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Berres, M. and Knoblock, P. (1987). Lessons from integrated education. In Program Models for Mainstreaming. Rockville, MD: Aspen: 287-301.

Carney, I.H. (1987). Working with families. In Orelove, F.P., Sobsey, D. (Eds.). Educating Children with Multiple Disabilities: A Transdisciplinary Approach. Maryland: Paul H. Brookes: 315-338.

Larrivee, B. (1981). "Effect of inservice training intensity on teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming". Exceptional Children, 48(1), 34-39.

Noonan, M.J. and Kilgo, J.L. (1987). Transition services for early age individuals with severe mental retardation. In Ianacone, R.N. and Stodden, R.A. (Eds.) Transition Issues and Directions. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Wade, R.K. (1984). "What makes a difference in inservice teacher education? A meta-analysis of research." Educational Leadership, 42 (4), 48-54.

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Zemke, R. and Zemke, S. (1988). "30 things we know for sure about adult learning." TRAINING, July, 1988, 57-61.

10. SEND RECEIVING STAFF TO VISIT THE STUDENT IN HIS/HER CURRENT PLACEMENT.

If the student will be moving, what benefit is derived from observing the sending placement?

Observing the sending placement will allow the receiving staff the opportunity to observe the student's current behaviors and the interventions which are being used. This will assist the team in determining which behavior management and teaching strategies to use when the student moves to the new placement. Observing the sending environment will also give the staff an understanding of the changes that the student will be experiencing during the transition -- things like missing old friends, maneuvering around new obstacles, adjusting to different noises, etc. One other important benefit to this type of visit -- it may help to put the sending and receiving staff on equal footing by recognizing the value of the current placement and giving the sending staff a chance to meet on their own territory.

Which staff should visit the student in his/her current placement?

Each situation will be different. Usually the teacher, the principal and any therapists who will be providing services will benefit from visiting the sending classroom. The key to this answer lies with evaluating the benefits of the visit against the potential for overwhelming the sending environment, staff and student. Spacing out the visits may be the best way to get a variety of staff in to observe.

How many times should the staff visit?

One to three visits should provide the necessary observation time. Detailed discussion with the staff can take place at times other than during observations.

What should occur during the visit?

The structure and objectives for the visits should be discussed ahead of time to ensure minimal disruption and maximum benefit. These objectives may include systematic observation of the student, interaction with the student, interviews with staff, review of records and training related to specific student needs. These activities may be spread over different visits or accomplished during a full day of visiting.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

11. ARRANGE FOR CURRENT STAFF AND PARENTS TO VISIT THE NEW PLACEMENT ONE OR MORE TIMES.

What are the benefits of having the sending staff visit the receiving placement?

There are two major benefits to visiting the receiving placement. First, the sending staff will be able to assess what skills may be needed by the student to function successfully in the new placement. They can then begin to prepare the student for the transition. Secondly, the visit provides another opportunity for the various staff members to develop a supportive relationship which will carry on beyond the actual transfer of the student from one placement to another.

Which staff should visit the new placement?

Usually, the teacher and therapists will be the only staff who need to visit the new placement. However, if the student will be accompanied by a teacher's aide during or after the transition, then it would be critical that this person also visit the new placement.

When and how often should these visits occur?

The parents should visit the new placement regularly, before, during and after the transition. While the parents should feel that they can visit their child's placement at any time, making an appointment for the visit may lead to more effective interactions with the staff.

The staff should visit the new placement one to three times before the transition, and as needed after the transition. These visits should always be scheduled in advance.

What should occur during the visit?

The staff can work cooperatively to perform a systematic assessment of the receiving environment, both the classroom and the rest of the building and school grounds. This assessment should highlight the skills the student will need to be successful in his/her new placement. The staff can also spend time reviewing the classroom schedule and current curriculum to determine how best to modify it to meet the student's needs. Of course, throughout the entire visit, there should be a focus on developing good working relationships among the staff so that ongoing collaborative consultation can take place after the actual transition.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Cutler, B. (1981). Unraveling the Special Education Maze: An Action Guide for Parents. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Spodek, B. (1982). "What special educators need to know about regular classrooms." The Educational Forum, 46(3), 295-307.

12. ARRANGE FOR STUDENT TO VISIT THE NEW PLACEMENT ONE OR MORE TIMES.

Why should the student visit the new placement?

There are many benefits to be gained from this step in the transition process. Visits give the student the opportunity to slowly become accustomed to the new environment and people. It may highlight skills that the student needs or potential problems that might arise after the transition is final. This type of visit also allows the other students in the class and the staff the opportunity to slowly meet the student and adjust to any changes that his/her presence may cause.

How often should the student visit?

The number of visits will differ greatly based on each student's needs. For some students two visits may be enough to allow them to adapt to the new placement. Other students may need to visit once a week for a month, then two or three days per week, etc., until the transition is completed over many months. To determine this schedule, the entire team must work together to assess the student's strengths in transitions and the skill and comfort level of the receiving staff. (See Appendix C.)

What should the student do during the visit?

This, too, will vary greatly depending on the individual student. Generally the student should participate as much as possible in the regular classroom activities, without being forced. It's important to keep the visits positive in nature so that the student will feel good about the move. The staff may want to provide a variety of structured activities for the student, facilitate interactions between the student and his new classmates, and provide lots of positive reinforcement.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Many of the books and articles referred to in the other sections recommend that the student visit the new placement. However, none of these provide any detail on this point. Perhaps the best guide is common sense!

13. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING STAFF AND OTHERS TO MEET TO DISCUSS STUDENT. THIS GROUP SHOULD NOW FORM THE "TRANSITION TEAM" WHICH WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF THE TRANSITION ACTIVITIES.

Who should be on the "Transition Team"?

While it is important for all people involved with the student to communicate about the student's needs, the Transition Team must be a small enough group to be effective. Literature on effective group dynamics suggests that the ideal working group should have five to eight members. This may be a good guideline to keep in mind when identifying the core group of people who will make up the Transition Team. Specifically, this team should include the parent, the principal of the receiving school, the primary teachers from both the sending and receiving placements and representatives of the related professionals from both settings. This group may also include an independent advocate for the student, if deemed necessary by any of the team members.

What is the purpose of the Transition Team?

The main purpose of the Transition Team is to assist the student and other staff persons to achieve the most effective transition possible. This may be accomplished through a variety of planning and problem solving activities. This may also be accomplished in a more general way by providing the receiving staff with a support group to turn to for whatever reason.

How often should the Team meet?

Each team will be different in their level of efficiency. However, they will need to accomplish, at a minimum, the following tasks: development of the IEP, the transition plan, and the student's schedule, curriculum modifications, an evaluation system, systems for peer support and an effective communication system for the team members. These tasks will best be accomplished over a number of meetings, rather than a few long and laborious sessions. As school personnel are usually short on available meeting time, flexible scheduling will be necessary during the transition period. Also, the team should make a concerted effort to be efficient and effective during meeting time. Using techniques such as agendas with time lines, minutes and situational leadership may help to make the most of these meetings.

How should the team be organized?

The members of the transition team should work in collaboration, with meeting the needs of the student as their common goal. The term collaborative implies a parity of knowledge and skills among all parties. This is not to say that no member has expertise in a particular area, but instead that each member has knowledge and skills which, while different, are equally valuable. To begin with, the leadership on the team may be taken by someone from the sending team, as he/she will be most familiar with the student. However, as soon as possible, the leadership role should be taken by the receiving staff, as ultimately, the responsibility for the student will rest with them.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Idol, L., Paolucci-Whitcomb, P., and Nevin, A. (1986). Collaborative Consultation. Rockville, MD: Aspen.

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

14. DESIGN IEP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WHICH MEET THE STUDENT'S NEEDS WITHIN THE NEW PLACEMENT, AND ENHANCE HIS/HER ABILITY TO BECOME INTEGRATED WITH PEERS.

Who designs the IEP goals and objectives?

The Planning and Placement Team designs the IEP for the student. Usually, the Transition Team will be a subgroup of the PPT. This subgroup will probably be in the best position to make recommendations to the larger PPT regarding the program for the student.

When should this be done?

Usually, the IEP is designed annually, with only occasional modifications during the year. However, during a transition, the IEP may need to be changed a number of times. The first IEP is designed before the change in placement is made. Then, changes may be made as the new placement is assessed more thoroughly, after the student has visited and unexpected needs arise, or after the student has settled into the new placement.

How can IEP objectives enhance integration?

There are many ways in which IEP objectives can enhance integration. To begin with, objectives which address functional, relevant skills, will lead to greater independence for the student. The more independent the student is, the more likely he/she will be able to develop friendships on his/her own and function in a variety of environments The concept of age-appropriateness should be considered whenever designing objectives or instruction for the student. By providing the student with materials which are appropriate for his/her chronological age and interacting with the student as is normal for his/her age, the student will be more likely to be viewed as a peer.

In addition to these overriding concepts, specific skill areas can be focused on to enhance integration. For example, students with communication skills, whether traditional or alternative, will be more able to interact with peers. Along with this is a need for students to be able to initiate communication, so that the burden of developing friendships is not always on the students without disabilities. Appropriate social behavior is important, too. However, adults should realize that certain behaviors which do not seem appropriate to them may be very acceptable among peers of certain age groups (e.g., using curse words). So, the team should attempt to identify the specific skills which will help the student to become a part of the various groups within the school community. Students should also be taught skills that may be necessary for maintaining friendships, such as sharing, providing support and resolving conflicts.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Cloninger, C.J. (1988) "A planning and decision making process for meeting IEP goals in regular education activities." Presentation of Vermont Interdisciplinary Team for Intensive Special Education, 15th annual TASH Conference, Washington, D.C. 12/88.

Kaczmarek, L. (1985). "Integrating language/communication objectives into the total preschool curriculum". TEACHING Exceptional Children, 17 (3), 183-189.

Meyer-Voeltz, L. (1984). Program and curriculum innovations to prepare children for integration. In Certo, N., Haring, N. and York, R. (Eds.) Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students: Rational Issues and Progressive Alternatives. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes: 155-184.

Schutz, R.P., Williams, W., Iverson, G.S., and Duncan, D. (1984). Social integration of severely handicapped students. In Certo, N., Haring, N., York, R. (Eds.) Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students: Rational Issues and Progressive Alternatives. Baltimore: Brookes: 15-42.

Stainback, W. and Stainback, S. (1987). "Facilitating Friendships." Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 22 (1), 18-25.

York, J. and Vandercook, T. (1988). "What's in an IEP? Writing objectives for an integrated education." Minnesota UAP IMPACT, Vol. 1 (2), Winter 1988, 16-19.

15. ESTABLISH A WEEKLY SCHEDULE FOR THE STUDENT WHICH ADDRESSES IEP OBJECTIVES IN THE MOST INTEGRATED CONTEXTS POSSIBLE.

Why is a schedule important?

There are a number of benefits to establishing a weekly schedule. First, a schedule designed for the individual student will ensure that attention is paid within each period of the day to the student's IEP objectives. This is particularly helpful when the student is following an adapted curriculum or only partially participating in the activity that the rest of the class is doing. A schedule can also be reviewed with attention to the number and quality of opportunities for the student to interact with his/her peers. In addition, a schedule provides a structure for the day--particularly important for helping a student with disabilities through transitional periods. If a schedule is in place to assist the student and staff through the initial days in the new placement, then it can be revised as the student and staff become more familiar with each other.

Should all IEP objectives be addressed immediately?

All IEP objectives need to be addressed eventually, with the intention of meeting them by the end of the IEP year. However, each objective does not need to be addressed immediately or every day. The student's schedule should be designed with the intention of allowing enough time to meet the objectives within the year. If an objective is not addressed during a review period (usually a quarter of the school year), then a note should be made of this in the progress report. As the year progresses, the schedule will be changed numerous times, thus allowing opportunity to add or detract time from a specific objective as necessary.

How are integrated contexts chosen for instruction?

The team may want to begin with the assumption that the student should be included in all of the same contexts as his/her peers without handicaps. Then, going forward with this assumption, modifications can be made wherever necessary. This approach is in keeping with the spirit of PL 94-142 and the principle of education in the least restrictive environment.

A number of other factors can be considered when choosing instructional contexts. These include teacher receptivity to the student, class size, student reaction to the particular variables of the environment (space, noise, temperature) and the ease with which the curriculum can be modified.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Biklen, D., Lehr, S., and Taylor, S. (1987). Purposeful Integration... Inherently Equal. Syracuse: Center on Human Policy.

Cloninger, C. (1988). A planning and decision making process for meeting IEP goals in regular education activities. Presentation of Vermont Interdisciplinary Team for Intensive Special Education, 15th Annual Conference of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, Washington, D.C., December, 1988.

Stainback, S. and Stainback, W. (1985) Integration of Students with Severe Handicaps into Regular Schools. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W., and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

16. PROVIDE ACTIVITIES TO "SENSITIZE" NON-HANDICAPPED PEERS.

Why is it important to provide activities to "sensitize" non-handicapped peers?

Many students have not had much information on or experience with people with disabilities. Some of these students will still be very comfortable around the new student and naturally find ways to interact. Others will need some information and guidance in order to understand and be open to a student with disabilities. By providing information early, adults can minimize misconceptions, bad habits and poor relationships.

What kind of information and activities should be provided?

This can vary depending on the current level of information and experience, and the age of the students. The basic messages should include the fact that all people have unique capabilities, that all people are alike in many ways, that diversity is valued, that all people can participate in schools in various ways, that we should treat people with disabilities as we would wish to be treated. Obviously, these messages are based on values we have about education and people. The team may want to discuss and agree upon the values they want communicated to the students.

More specific information may include strategies for communicating in non-traditional ways (i.e., sign language, electronic boards), adaptive devices used by persons with physical disabilities, strategies for responding to unusual behavior, ways to peer tutor or ideas for developing friendships.

Information can be provided through books, filmstrips, videos, discussions, simulations, guest lecturers (perhaps an adult with a disability), or "on-the-spot" in response to a situation.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Levine, M. (1990). Keeping A Head In School: A Student's Book About Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders. Cambridge: Educator's Publishing Service.

The Kids on the Block Series, Twenty First Century Books, 38 S. Market Street, Frederick, MD 21701

Bookbinder, Susan (1978). Mainstreaming: What Every Child Needs to Know About Disabilities. The Rhode Island Easter Seal Society

Barnes, E.; Berrigan, C.; and Biklen D. (1978). What's the Difference? Teaching Positive Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities. Human Policy Press.

Fresno Unified School District. "Different But The Same" Videotape.

17. INFORM REGULAR EDUCATION PARENTS AND PTA OF INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES.

Why is it necessary to inform the "regular" education parents of integration activities?

Although these parents may never have direct contact with the student, their children will, and might want to talk about it at home. If the parents have correct information about integration and disabilities, they may be able to guide their child's understanding of disabilities in a positive way. In addition, this information may enlighten parents who have had little or no exposure to people with disabilities.

What can and should they be told?

It is critical to maintain confidentiality regarding specific students. Parents should not be given specific information about children that are not theirs. However, parents can be told the school is integrating students with disabilities, the philosophy of integration, benefits for all children, general characteristics of people with disabilities, research on integration, etc. Perhaps most importantly, they can be reassured that integration will have a positive, not negative, impact on their children.

How can this information be shared?

Schools have been very successful at sharing this information in a variety of ways, including PTA meetings, resources in the school library, articles in the school newspaper, presentations during open house, one-on-one discussions with parents, or showing a videotape with discussion during a special evening event.

Where can I find more information on this step?

The best sources for ideas for this step are other schools which have been involved in integration. Call up colleagues or parent in another district and ask them for their experiences and recommendations.

18. MODIFY CURRICULA AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY.

What type of curricula modification might be necessary?

Each student's curriculum needs will vary greatly. Strategies for addressing these needs include (but are not limited to): cooperative learning groups, flexible scheduling, task analysis, simplifying instructions, using concrete materials, paring down the requirements, adding extra drills, changing the acceptable mode of reception or response (i.e., audio tapes vs. written notes), increasing feedback and peer support.

What type of evaluation modification might be necessary?

Again, each student's needs will vary greatly. Some strategies for modifying evaluation systems include (but are not limited to): contracting, averaging multiple grades, use of narrative reports, point systems, self comparison (criterion-referenced tools), shared grading and test modifications (i.e., oral, untimed, open book, alternate environments, peer assisted). Diploma and graduation requirements may also be modified for the special needs student.

Who should make these modifications?

Modifications which affect only an individual student may be made by the educational team. At times this will mean a modification by the teacher, at times by a cooperative effort of a number of the team members. When modifications will affect more than one student, the building principal and/or other administrators may need to be involved. For example, graduation requirements affect the entire student population and therefore there would be a need for much input in the decision making process.

How might these modifications affect the other students in the class?

Modifications may have a minor or major effect on other students depending on the nature of the changes. The best strategy when making modifications is to design a method for evaluating their effect on the targeted student as well as the other students in the class or school. When evaluating, the following factors may be considered: quantity and quality of attention being paid to all students, rate of learning for all students, amount of cooperation among students, level of individualization for students, motivation of students, and the perspectives/attitudes of students and staff. Hopefully, you will find, as many others have found, that curricula and evaluation modification based on the needs of students with disabilities will have a positive effect for all students.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Baumgart, D., Brown, L., Pumpian, I. Nisbet, J., Ford, A., Sweet, M., Messina, R. and Schroeder, J. (1982). "Principle of partial participation and individualized adaptations in educational programs for severely handicapped students." Journal of the Association for the Severely Handicapped, 7 (2), 17-27.

Butler, S.E., Magliocca, L.A., Torres, L.A., William, L. (1984). "Grading the mainstreamed student: A decision making model for modification." The Directive Teacher, 7 (1), 6-7.

Heron, T.E. and Harris, K.C. (1987). The Educational Consultant. Austin, Tx: Pro-Ed.

Johnson, D.W., and Johnson, R.T. (1986). "Mainstreaming and cooperative learning strategies." Exceptional Children, 52, 553-561.

Kinnison, L.R., Hayes, C., Acord, J. (1981). "Evaluating student progress in mainstream classes." TEACHING Exceptional Children, 13 (3), 97-99.

Stainback, W., Stainback, S., Courtriage, L., and Twila, J. (1985). "Facilitating mainstreaming by modifying the mainstream." Exceptional Children, Vol. 52 (2), 144-152.

19. ARRANGE FOR ANY NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS TO PHYSICAL PLANT OR EQUIPMENT.

What types of physical adaptations might be necessary?

The school environment should be accessible to students with a variety of handicapping conditions. Major areas such as the school entrance and exit, doorways, bathrooms, cafeteria and classrooms should be made accessible to individuals using wheelchairs, canes, crutches, etc. This may involve widening doorways, adding ramps or placing bars in bathroom stalls. Other modifications might include obtaining wheelchair accessible telephones and drinking fountains, and adapting home economics and industrial arts classrooms for wheelchair users. There are specific regulations pertaining to building accessibility which are beyond the scope of this booklet. Administrators may wish to familiarize themselves with these regulations by looking at appropriate materials.

What types of equipment might be necessary?

Students with disabilities often rely on a variety of equipment to assist them throughout the day. This equipment might include communication systems, electronic switches, adaptive eating devices, positioning devices, mobility devices, functional vocational jigs, hearing aids, computers and Braille writers. Some of these devices are necessary to function at even a minimal level during the school day, while other equipment may be helpful but not necessary.

There are other kinds of equipment which the school may need to obtain to offer a functional curriculum for the student(s). For example, a refrigerator and cooking facilities may be necessary at the elementary level to provide instruction in food preparation and related functional skills. A computer or typewriter may be helpful in providing job training. Each team will need to evaluate the student's curriculum needs to determine the necessary equipment.

Who should make these arrangements?

Every procurement system is different, so it will be important to know how your specific system currently works. However, classroom teachers are often allowed to make small purchasing decisions for their own classroom. Physical, speech and occupational therapists often work with medical personnel, parents, and insurance companies to obtain some types of equipment. And, of course, administrators will need to make decisions about any major modifications which may be necessary.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Biklen, D. (1985). Achieving the Complete School: Strategies for Effective Mainstreaming. N.Y.: Teachers College Press.

Fraser, B.A., Hensinger, R.N. and Phelps, J.A. (1987). Physical Management of Multiple Handicaps. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Montgomery, J. (1987). Mainstreamed orthopedically handicapped students in a regular public school. In Berres, M. and Knoblock, P. (Eds.) Program Models for Mainstreaming. Rockville, MD: Aspen: 169-189.

"National Center for a Barrier Free Environment." Access Information Bulletin. Washington D.C.

Wilson, P., Casella, V. and Wilson, W. (1989). Microcomputers and new technologies. In Gaylord-Ross, R. (Ed.) Integration Strategies for Students with Handicaps. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes: 249-278.

20. ARRANGE FOR TRANSPORTATION.

What factors should be considered when arranging for transportation for a student with a disability?

Whenever possible, students with disabilities should be transported to and from school in the same manner as their non-handicapped peers. Too often it is automatically assumed that a student with a disability label needs special transportation. Instead, the student's individual strengths and needs should be examined with a bias toward using the regular transportation system. If the team determines that a special bus is required, the following issues should be considered: length of time spent on the bus, safety of the student and fellow passengers, arrival and departure times of special buses, drop-off and pick-up locations at school, the need for wheelchair lifts, bus aides and additional transportation costs.

Transportation for community-based instruction should also be addressed. For students following a functional curriculum, community-based instruction is critical. Therefore, students will need access to public environments (i.e., shopping mall, grocery store, restaurant) on a regular basis. Depending on the location of the school, students may be able to walk with staff to the community. Other forms of transportation which may be used include an agency owned vehicle, public buses, taxis, personal cars and Dial-a-Ride. Each system will need to determine the best transportation for its own needs and resources.

Who should be involved in making the transportation arrangements?

The responsibility for transportation arrangements usually falls on administrative personnel. However, parents and teachers will also be involved regularly in solving minor problems with transportation.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Bluth, L. (1985). Transporting handicapped students: A resource manual and recommended guidelines for school transportation and special education personnel. National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 2021 K Street N.W., Suite 315, Washington, D.C. 20006

Azrael, A. & Klein, S. (1989) (Eds.) "School bus safety." Exceptional Parent, 19(6), 60-62.

21. COORDINATE ANY RELATED SERVICES FOR THE NEW PLACEMENT.

What is meant by related services?

According to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), related services include the following services provided to a student in order that he/she may be able to benefit from education: psychological, health, language, speech and hearing, translation, guidance, social work, physical therapy, occupational therapy, medical services for diagnosis and evaluation, and parent counseling/training.

How might these services be provided in the new placement?

The provision of related services typically occurs through a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary model. While a thorough discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of these models is beyond the scope of this booklet, many people consider the transdisciplinary model to be the state-of-the-art model for providing educational services to students with disabilities. The transdisciplinary model combines the use of a joint team approach with role release and ongoing staff development. These characteristics lend themselves well to integrated environments. In this model, professionals from the related disciplines can provide consultation services, direct services to the student in and out of the classroom, monitoring and staff training. The type of service provided will be based on the individual needs of the student and the abilities of the educational team to meet those needs.

What type of coordination is necessary?

To begin with, the team should decide what their operating model (multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary) will be, and insure that everyone on the team understands the application of the model. After this, the group will need to develop a communication system so that related professionals can adequately communicate with parents, administrators and classroom personnel. Arrangements should also be made for the scheduling of related services. Early attention to scheduling is critical so that services can be provided in the best times and contexts possible. Arrangements should be made for ongoing formal staff training (informal training will occur almost daily in a transdisciplinary model). Specific responsibilities of various staff members should be articulated and understood by everyone on the team. Finally, arrangements should be made for regular team meetings so that the entire team can review student progress, problem solve, and choose future directions.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Campbell, P.J. (1987). "The integrated programming team: An approach for coordinating professionals of various disciplines in programs for students with severe and multiple handicaps." Journal of the Association for Persons With Severe Handicaps, 12 (2), 107-116.

Lyon, S. and Lyon, G. (1980). "Team functioning and staff development: A role release approach to providing integrated educational services for severely handicapped students." Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 5 (3), 250-263.

Rainforth, B. and York, J (1987). "Integrating related services in community instruction." Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 12 (3), 190-198.

Sears, C.J. (1981). "The transdisciplinary approach: A process for compliance with Public Law 94-142." Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 6, 22-29.

Wilson, W. (1989). Administrative strategies for integration. In Gaylord-Ross, R. (Ed.) Integration Strategies for Students with Handicaps. Baltimore: Brookes: 299-319.

22. SET UP COMMUNICATION SYSTEM BETWEEN NECESSARY PARTIES (I.E., HOME-SCHOOL, SENDING-RECEIVING TEACHERS).

What are the benefits of a formal communication system?

Choosing a formal communication system stresses the importance of ongoing, effective communication. While having a communication system does not insure its use, it is more likely to be used than if it was never even developed. A formal communication system may also provide the benefit of resulting in records of decisions, responsibilities and other critical information.

What types of communication systems are effective?

Systems that work for one team may not work for another team, so it is important that each team choose the best system for meeting its needs and styles. Some common systems include regular telephone contacts, home-school notebooks, student notebooks for the classroom, case review meetings with minutes, written lesson plans and data collection, logs for related professionals and video and audio tapes.

Which parties need to communicate and how often?

Communication needs vary with each student, each team and at different stages of the transition process. The individuals who have direct contact with the student on a daily basis probably also find themselves communicating with each other on a daily basis. This group may also benefit from a weekly staff meeting to discuss issues that do not lend themselves to brief chats in front of the students.

Parents and classroom personnel may benefit from daily communication through the home-school notebook. This notebook can also carry information to and from related professionals. Telephone calls can be made less frequently, but often serve to be a more thorough means for communicating than written notes. However, telephone calls should not always indicate to the receiver that there is a problem. Telephone calls should also be placed to discuss positive events in the student's life!

Related professionals that provide services once a week or less may only need to sit down with the rest of the instructional team a few times per month. These sessions are important though, especially in the transdisciplinary model, so it is critical that arrangements are made for their participation in staff meetings.

Finally, administrators need to be aware of the general status of the program. Responsibility for communicating the status of the program should be shared between the teacher and the principal, with both parties using their best judgement and following the system's policies for communicating over more important issues.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Downs-Taylor, C. & Landon, E. (1981). Collaboration in Special Education. Belmont, CA: Pitman Learning.

Heron, T.E. and Harris, K.C. (1987). The Educational Consultant. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Heward, W.L., Dardig, J.C. and Rossett, A. (1979). Working with Parents of Handicapped Children. Georgia: Charles E. Merrill.

Salend, S. (1984)."Factors contributing to the development of successful mainstreaming programs." Exceptional Children, 5 (50), 409-416.

23. TRANSFER APPROPRIATE STUDENT RECORDS TO RECEIVING SCHOOL.

Why should student records be transferred?

While transferring records seems to be good common sense, many times students are transitioned with only a minimum of records, or with records following the student months later. So perhaps it is important to identify the reasons for transferring the necessary records in a timely fashion. Student records provide much information about the student's educational and social history and current educational and social status. Documents such as the IEP provide direction to the educational team on the agreed upon program. Other documents, such as data on student progress, will give the staff baseline information from which to look for progress or discrepancies. Any information which will assist the receiving staff in understanding the student and maintaining an effective structure for him/her will serve to ease the transition.

What type of records should be transferred?

Most systems have a policy regarding the automatic transfer of certain documents, such as the student's IEP, progress reports, and medical information. In addition to these documents, it may be helpful to transfer any assessment reports, enrollment records, work samples, lesson plans and data collection systems.

How does the principle of confidentiality apply?

Public Law 94-142 directs that "personally identifiable information" about a student or family cannot be shared with anyone other than officials of participating agencies without parental consent. Therefore, after the placement decision has been made, the receiving staff can be considered officials of participating agencies. Still, it may be a good policy to inform the parents that the records will be shared with the new staff.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Hart, V. (1981). Mainstreaming Children with Special Needs. N.Y.: Longman.

24. ADDRESS ANY CHANGES IN, OR NEEDS FOR MEDICAL SERVICES DUE TO THE TRANSITION.

What might need to be considered for a child who is medically involved in some way?

In addition to standard medical issues (i.e., emergency contact, allergy immunizations, medications), the school may also need to consider issues related to seizure disorders, toileting, catheterization, menses, nutrition and feeding, mobility, proper lifting, skin care and progressive illness. While not all medical issues can be listed here, the important point is to ask as many questions as possible about the child's unique medical needs and make comprehensive plans for how they will be addressed. A checklist which may prompt discussion about various issues has been included (Appendix D).

Who is responsible for handling medical concerns?

Many different people will be involved in some way. For example, while the teacher may not be directly involved in more complicated procedures such as gastrectomy tube feeding, he/she will need to coordinate schedules with the nurse and inform the nurse of any unusual physical conditions noticed in the classroom.

What is most important is that these roles and responsibilities be clearly assigned to appropriate personnel so follow through is consistent, particularly in the early stages of transition. An excellent source for guiding the delineation of roles and responsibilities has been developed by a Joint Task Force for the Management of Children with Special Health Needs (see below).

Where can I find more information on this step?

"Guidelines for the Delineation of Roles and the Responsibilities for the Safe Delivery of Special Health Care in the Educational Setting." CEC, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589.

25. TRANSITION STUDENT TO NEW PLACEMENT (PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME BASED ON STUDENT'S NEEDS).

How should the schedule for transition be decided?

The student's needs are the primary consideration in determining a schedule for transition. This means that all of the necessary arrangements should be made before moving the student. While, at times, this may delay the transition process, success is more important than speed. When all arrangements have been made, the team can consider the following variables in deciding what type of transition schedule will be best for the student: the student's prior ability to adapt to new experiences, the demands of the new school environment, and the comfort levels of the parents and receiving staff. Then the team can put into writing the exact time lines for movement from one placement to another. (See Appendix B.)

Are there any suggestions for the actual transition to the new placement?

The team should try to provide a calm environment for the student -- not too many people, not too much obvious anxiety. The student will be likely to sense the reactions of the adults around him/her, and may mimic these. Therefore, developing a positive, calm climate is critical. Also, the staff and parents should be prepared to "give it time." There may be a honeymoon period followed by some more challenging days, or there may be some challenging days right up front. In either case, it is important to allow the student time to adjust before making any decisions calling for dramatic change in the original plan.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W. and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

26. DEVELOP PEER SUPPORT GROUP FOR STUDENT (i.e., CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, PEER TUTORS).

Why is a support group necessary for the student?

There are numerous benefits to be gained, for the students and staff, from a peer support group. Perhaps most importantly, for all students, is the development of friendships. While many friendships happen spontaneously, friendships between children with and without handicaps often need a little nudge. By setting up specific support systems for the student, interactions and friendships may be more likely to materialize. Peers may also be able to provide tutoring assistance to students with disabilities. Clearly the student with the disability will benefit from this assistance, but literature shows that the peer tutors may also benefit academically. Peers can also offer other types of assistance such as transporting the student around the building, assisting in the lunch line or sitting with the student on the bus. Finally, all students will have the opportunity to gain a broader perspective and greater acceptance of diversity through working and socializing with a variety of people.

What kind of preparation might the students without disabilities need?

The possible needs of these students can be grouped into two major areas: modification of attitudes and modification of behaviors. There are many commercial programs and much literature on effective means for changing students' attitudes toward people with disabilities. While it would be good to start addressing student attitudes before the new student enters the program, it is unrealistic to think that attitude change will be accomplished in a short period of time. Also, the students will need exposure to each other to assist them in their understanding. Therefore, any efforts to address student attitudes should be implemented before, during and after the transition. The behaviors of students will also need to be addressed. This may include anything from teaching them the skills needed to communicate with someone who uses a symbol communication board to providing tutoring support in functional academics. Whatever the case, many students will be eager to learn about the new student and how they can be of assistance.

What types of support might be provided?

Many teams have been very creative about using peers to provide support to new students. Marsha Forest, a well-known advocate of integration, recommends developing a "Circle of Friends" around the student. This circle brainstorms on what the student's needs are, and then finds ways to meet those needs. This might include (but is not limited to): peer tutoring, assistance in the bathroom, moving around the school, partners at recess, help in the locker room, phone calls in the evenings, assistance on the bus or invitations to social events. The philosophy behind this approach is that peers usually know best what their peers may need. Adults simply facilitate the process and the development of the systems to meet those needs.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Barnes, E., Berrigan, C. and Biklen, D. (1978). What's the Difference? Teaching Positive Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities. Syracuse: Human Policy Press.

Falvey, M.A. (1986). Community Based Curriculum: Instructional Strategies for Students with Severe Handicaps. Baltimore: Brookes.

Forest, M. (Ed.) (1986). More Education/Integration. Downsview, Ontario: G. Allan Roeher Institute.

Kohl, F.L., Moses, L.G., Stettner-Eaton, B.A. (1984). A systematic training program for teaching non-handicapped students to be instructional trainers of severely handicapped schoolmates. In Certo, N., Haring, N. and York R. Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students. Baltimore: Brookes: 185-196.

Meyer-Voeltz, L. (1984). Program and curriculum innovations to prepare children for integration. In Certo, N., Haring, N. and York, R. Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students: Rational Issues and Progressive Alternatives. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes: 155-184.

Stainback, S. and Stainback, W. (1985). Integration of Students with Severe Handicaps into Regular School. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Stainback, W. and Stainback, S. (1987). "Facilitating Friendships." Education and Training in Mental Retardation, March 87, 18-25.

27. IDENTIFY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILY AND SIBLINGS IF DESIRED.

Why do the student's siblings need support?

In many cases the siblings may have never attended the same school as the student. Also, many times they have not told friends or acquaintances about the fact that they have a brother or sister with a disability. This new situation may bring much anxiety to the sibling, therefore adding stress to the family during the transition period and beyond.

The siblings may be an excellent source of ideas and assistance in integrating the student to the new school. This role should never be forced on siblings, but with proper supports, they may wish to help out.

What type of support should be considered?

The parents and siblings themselves can be asked what types of support might be desired. If they are unfamiliar with options, the team may want to suggest discussion/counseling opportunities with the school psychologist, social worker or guidance counselor, or talking with other students who have brothers/sisters with disabilities.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Powell, T.H. and Ogle, P. (1985). Brothers and Sisters - A Special Part of Exceptional Families. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Sibling Information Network, Pappanikou Center, 991 Main Street, Suite 3A, East Hartford, CT 06108.

28. ESTABLISH A FOLLOW-UP, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND CRISIS INTERVENTION SUPPORT TEAM OF STAFF AND PARENTS.

Why is a support group important for the staff and parents?

An often repeated fear of educators discussing integration is that of being "dumped on." Effective integration does not mean being "dumped on," but instead a carefully planned process of providing all of the support necessary to help a student succeed in the new environment. Staff and parents need to know in advance that they will have support from administration and colleagues when they need it. Just the knowledge that this is available may decrease the amount of anxiety experienced over receiving a new student with disabilities. As well as providing emotional support, a support group brings various perspectives and ideas to any problem solving activity. By combining the skills and experiences of a variety of people, it will be easier to provide a quality educational program for the student.

What type of support might be needed?

Each person on the team may need different types of support. These might include consultation on specific problems, access to library resources, assistance in curriculum and evaluation development, positive reinforcement from peers, a chance to talk about various issues or objective observation of the student or themselves.

Who might be on this support team?

Anyone that is particularly interested in playing a supportive role. However, it is usually composed of the same core group of people on the Transition Team. Not only are these the people who are most familiar with the day-in and day-out issues surrounding the student, but they have, hopefully, already formed a good working relationship through the transition process.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Frith, G. and Mims, A. (1985). "Burnout among special education paraprofessionals." TEACHING Exceptional Children, 17(3), 225-227.

Greenburg, D.E. (1987). A Special Educator's Perspective on Interfacing Special and General Education: A Review for Administrators. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Haring, N. and Billingsley, F.F. (1984). Systems-change strategies to ensure the future of integration. In Certo, N., Haring, R., and York, R. (Eds.) Public School Integration of Severely Handicapped Students: Rational Issues and Progressive Alternatives. Baltimore: Brookes, 83-106.

Taylor, S.J. (1982). "From segregation to integration: Strategies for integrating severely handicapped students in normal school and community settings." Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 8, 42-49.

Thousand, J., Fox, T., Reid, R., Godek, J., Williams, W. and Fox, W. (1986). The Homecoming Model. Burlington, VT: Center for Developmental Disabilities.

29. MONITOR THE STUDENT'S PROGRESS ON IEP OBJECTIVES REGULARLY, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO NEW PLACEMENT AND INTEGRATION INTO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. MAKE ANY NECESSARY MODIFICATIONS.

How often should student progress be monitored?

A good instructional team monitors the student on a daily basis, both formally and informally. While informal observation of a student is critical, the team must also be systematic about data collection. Some IEP objectives should be monitored through data collection on a daily basis (i.e., toilet training, aggressive behavior), while other objectives may only need formal evaluation a few times per week or a few times per month. The team will need to determine the best type of evaluation schedule for each objective.

What techniques should be used to monitor/evaluate progress?

As in any type of assessment process, a combination of techniques is likely to give the most accurate information about the student. Possible techniques include frequent data collection, curriculum based assessment, observations, interviews, and teacher-made tests.

How can integration be highlighted in the monitoring process?

If the IEP objectives have been designed to include integrated settings or interactions with peers, then data collection on these objectives will provide some insight to the success of the integration component of the program. Discussions with students and staff throughout the building may also provide information about how well the student is becoming a part of the school community. In addition, there are a variety of checklists (e.g., " Test Your School's IQ: Integration Quotient") which help parents and/or professionals to assess the integration level of their educational program.

Who should be involved in monitoring/evaluating student progress?

The parents may or may not be involved in the actual evaluation of student progress, but should be monitoring their child's program at all times. They may also be willing to provide the team with information on changes they see in their child at home which may stem from efforts made at school. The instructional team (teachers, aides, therapists) should all bear some responsibility for evaluating the student's progress. Typically, however, the teacher is responsible for the majority of evaluation and monitoring specific to the student. In addition, the school principal should be evaluating the impact of the program on the entire school community, and communicate this information to the educational team.

What is the process for making modifications?

Each team may handle modifications differently. While some people may want each decision to be made by the group, this is not always very efficient. Therefore, it should be understood that certain types of decisions may be made by the person directly involved, while other decisions will be made by the group. For example, modification of a specific task analysis for paying for lunch may be done by the teacher, whereas modification of a behavior management plan may be decided by all of the people who interact with the student regularly. There are times when, although a group decision might be warranted, quick action must be taken. When this occurs, the person making the modification should be sure to inform the rest of the team as soon as possible of the details of the change.

Where can I find more information on this step?

Biklen, D., Lehr, S., Searl, S., and Taylor, S. (1987). Purposeful Integration . . . Inherently Equal. Syracuse: Center on Human Policy.

Falvey, M.A. (1986). Community Based Curriculum: Instructional Strategies for Students with Severe Handicaps. Baltimore: Brookes.

Meyer, L. (1987). Program Quality Indicators (PQI): A checklist of most promising practices in educational programs for students with severe disabilities. Seattle: The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps.

Powell, T., Rainforth, B., Hecimovic, A., Steere, D., Mayes M., Zoback, M., and Singer, A. (1985). Connecticut's Data-Based Model: Developing Integrated Public School Programs for Students with Severe Handicaps. N. Windham, CT: EASTCONN.

Salend, S. (1984). "Factors contributing to the development of successful mainstreaming programs." Exceptional Children, 5 (50), 409-416.

"Test Your School's IQ: Integration Quotient." East Hartford, CT: Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Council.

Appendixes

ECOLOGICAL INVENTORY

STUDENT: _____

DATE: _____

DOMAIN: _____

ENVIRONMENT	SUB ENVIRONMENT	ACTIVITY	SKILLS NEEDED BY STUDENT	ADAPTATION

ECOLOGICAL INVENTORY

SAMPLE

STUDENT: JOHN

DATE: September 6, 1989

DOMAIN: Vocational

ENVIRONMENT	SUB ENVIRONMENT	ACTIVITY	SKILLS NEEDED BY STUDENT	ADAPTATION
School	Homeroom	Seatwork	Raise hand to get attention Use "Mr." or "Mrs." when addressing adults Stay in seat for thirty minutes	
School	Hallways	Transitions between classes	Keep voice at low volume Keep hands to self	
		Opening locker	Turn dial to unlock	Card in wallet with combination #
School	Cafeteria	Counter work	Dispense desserts requested by students Collect correct change Use social language (i.e., thank you, bye)	Chart with correct amounts
School	Gym	Managing equipment	Put out equipment requested Put away equipment in proper place Ask for assistance as needed Stay on task until completed	Photos of each piece of equipment Photos of equipment on correct shelf
School	Classrooms	Seatwork	Keep desk area neat Have all necessary materials (i.e., pencil, paper)	Picture checklist

APPENDIX B

TIMELINE FOR TRANSITION

Student: _____ Date: _____

Sending Placement: _____ Receiving Placement: _____

Contact Person: _____ Contact Person: _____

DATES/TIMES OF STUDENT IN RECEIVING PLACEMENT	ACTIVITIES	ACCOMPANIED? Y/N	BY WHOM?

TARGET DATE FOR FULL-TIME PLACEMENT IN NEW SETTING: _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX C

TOPICS RELATED TO LRE

1. INTEGRATION - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
   - A general introduction to the philosophy behind the integration movement

2. MORE INTEGRATION
   - An in-depth presentation and discussion of philosophical issues (i.e., definitions, principle of normalization, natural proportions)

3. ESTABLISHING A MISSION STATEMENT
   - Developing a system-wide mission statement related to LRE

4. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES - WHO ARE THEY?
   - A general overview of terminology and characteristics, with an emphasis on individuality

5. SETTING A CLIMATE OF ACCEPTANCE
   - A discussion of methods for changing attitudes and developing an open, accepting climate before, during and after integration

6. IEP DESIGN FOR INTEGRATION
   - Strategies for infusing an IEP with objectives related to integration

7. STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING INTEGRATION
   - Affecting integration through program structure, curriculum modification and facilitating interactions

8. COLLABORATIVE EDUCATION
   - An overview of the related principles and practices

9. EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION
   - Strategies and skills for providing consultation to teachers

10. POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT
    - A general overview of applied behavior analysis (or "figuring out what's wrong") and strategies for managing behavior in varied settings

11. COMMUNITY-BASED INSTRUCTION
    - An overview of principles and practices related to developing and implementing a community-based curriculum component

12. STUDENT ASSESSMENT
    - Techniques for effective assessment (on-going data collection and annual evaluation) in integrated settings

13. GENERALIZATION
    - An overview of issues related to the generalization of skills and strategies for enhancing generalization

14. TRANSDISCIPLINARY TEAMING
    - An introduction to the basic concepts of the transdisciplinary model, including role release, functional skills and integrated therapy

Topics Related to LRE
Continued

15. IMPROVING TEAM EFFECTIVENESS
    - Covering issues related to group dynamics and the various factors which contribute to team effectiveness

16. EFFECTIVE TRANSITIONS
    - A review of the process/strategies necessary for effective transition of students from one placement to another

17. MEDICAL ISSUES
    - General information on seizures, medications, syndromes, and other health concerns

18. AUGMENTATIVE/ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION
    - An overview of general principles and practices related to alternative forms of communication

19. STUDENT TO STUDENT
    - Strategies for fostering peer interactions, understanding and friendships

20. ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND POSITIONING
    - A general introduction to a variety of adaptive equipment, the purposes served by each piece, and general safety guidelines for use

21. LOGISTICAL ISSUES
    - Discussion of issues such as staffing, scheduling, equipment, and budgeting

22. CURRICULAR INFUSION
    - Information on infusing current regular education curricula with information related to people with disabilities

23. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
    - Training in techniques such as prompting, the use of positive reinforcement, task analysis, and partial participation

24. LEGAL ISSUES
    - An overview of legislation affecting students with disabilities (i.e., placement, IEP's, behavioral interventions)

APPENDIX D

INTEGRATION FEVER: Effectively Educating Medically Fragile/Physically Involved Students in General Education

STUDENT CHECKLIST

Student Data

Diagnosis

Emergency Home Contact Information

Clinical/Medical Agency/Hospital Contact

Primary Medical Care Provider

Allergies/Special Alerts

Check for the Following:	School Issues to be Considered:
1. Medication	
Name Dosage Condition prescribed for Where administered (home/school) Shunt (current status/problems)	. Possible side effects . Who is responsible for administration . Storage of medication at school . Scheduling of administration . Behavioral effects . Implication for instruction, scheduling of instructional activities . Will teacher have to document effects of medication
2. Seizures	
History Date of last seizure Frequency/Duration Descriptions Post Seizure Behavior	. Preseizure indicators . Will teacher have to document occurrences

3. Immunization

Need for medical clearance for full immunization or waiver for student to attend school if immunization cannot be completed

4. Toileting/Catheterization

Degree of independence
Schedule

- Scheduling/degree of supervision
- Change of clothing
- Ordering of supplies/appliances
- Privacy for changing
- Adapted bathrooms/showers/furniture
- Who is responsible to ensure toileting
- Male/female assistance
- Instruction toward increasing independence

5. Menses

Cycle

- Assistance
- Supplies
- Disposal of blood products
- Privacy
- Instruction toward increasing independence

6. Nutritional Alerts

Food allergies/restrictions/ special diets
Dysphagia therapy
Food consistency (breaded/chopped)
Tube feeding
Supplemental sustenance

- Consultation with parent, nutritionist, food services manager, speech therapist
- Identify most appropriate area for feeding
- Schedule for supplemental feeding

7. Mode of Communication

Verbal
Sign (translator)
Communication board
Augmentative communication device

- How will staff communicate with student
- Will instruction in alternative communication mode be provided to staff

8. Mobility

- Independent
- Walking with assistance
- Use of support device (cane, crutches, walker, kayewalker, rollator, brace, splints)
- Type of wheelchair/motorized wheelchair/adaptive devices on chair
- Building accessibility
- Transportation to/from school
- Who provides needed assistance (daily emergency)
- Purchase of equipment (initial/replacement) vendor
- Independence/Transferring
- Care/repair/storage of equipment
- Activities outside school building
- How far can student walk using using adaptive device
- Instruction toward optimal independence

9. Behavior

- Aggressive
- Self-abusive
- Object-destructive
- Hygienic
- Who is responsible for planning behavior management/modification program
- Supplies/equipment
- Follow-up

10 Classroom Assistance

- Adaptive equipment/materials
- Personnel support (i.e., notetaker, translator)
- Availability of adaptive equipment/materials/personnel
- Training of personnel
- Emergency procedures

Source Unknown